(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) whether the case of overlooking environmental and security standards by the private companies has come to the notice of Government?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government has contracted 36 exploration blocks to Private Companies in four bidding rounds the New Exploration Licensing Policy (NELP). Details are as under:—

NELP round	Onland	Offshore	Deepwater	Total Blocks
I	0	11	4	15
II	2	1	2	5
III	0	3	7	10
IV	5	0	1	6
TOTAL	7	15	14	36

(c) According to information available in this Ministry, there is no reported case of overlooking environmental and security standards by private companies/operators.

ONGC'S Power Project in Karnataka

923. SHRI K.B. KRISHNAMURTHY: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has expressed reservations regarding ONGC taking up the 2000 MW gas based power project in Karnataka;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) Whether the State Government of Karnataka has requested the Central Government to permit ONGC to implement the proposed 2000 MW power project in view of the current energy shortage in Karnataka; and

(d) if so, the details of action, if any, taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (c) In addition to concentrating on its areas of

core competence, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation Limited (ONGC) has been exploring various options for diversification of their activities by forward and backward integration including power generation. In this regard, they have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Karnataka Industrial Area Development Board (KIADB) and Kanara Chamber of Commerce and Industry towards development of a Coastal SEZ at Mangalore. The Karnataka Government have requested the Union Government to permit ONGC to implement the various projects envisaged in the MoU, which are at a conceptual stage.

(d) It has been decided that Mangalore Refinery & Petrochemicals Limited (MRPL), a subsidiary company of ONGC, will be the implementing agency for the projects in the SEZ at Mangalore, and ONGC will process proposals/recommendations of MRPL related to this project and after approval, provide finances and guarantees as required and requested by MRPL.

Expert Report on Strategic Oil Reserve

924. SHRI C. PERUMAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Expert Panel has recommended for creation of strategic reserve of oil in the country;

(b) if so, whether the recommendation has been accepted;

(c) if so, the action taken in this regard; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) to (d) Government have already approved the setting up of a strategic crude oil reserve of 5 MMT at Mangalore, Visakhapatnam and Mangalore or nearby location for meeting contingencies arising out of supply disruptions. A special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) has been set up for executing the project.